

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000070

SIPDIS

STATE PASS DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAY
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENENDER
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ
STATE FOR DS/IP/AF, AF/EX, DS/IP/OPO, DS/ICI/PII, DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2015

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [KHLs](#) [PINR](#) [ETRD](#) [CASC](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: OIL WORKER HOSTAGE UPDATE SITREP #9

REF: A. LAGOS 69 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)B. ABUJA 76

Classified By: Acting Consul General William H. Howe for Reasons 1.4 (D
& E)

Hostage Welfare Update

[1](#)1. (C) At 22:00 January 19, Chris Jones, Tidex Operations Manager in Port Harcourt (PH), spoke with all four hostages, starting with Nigel Watson Clark, the British Ecodrill employee. Clark told him that AmCit Pat Landry was not well. He said constant movement, mosquitoes, and diarrhoea were taking their toll.

[1](#)2. (C) Clark reiterated the kidnappers' demands: the release of the ex-governor of Bayelsa, the release of Joshua Maharba (Note. Jones spells the name in his report as he heard it. It appeared in an e-mail as Joshua Macaiva. End Note.), the release of another person whose name was inaudible, and \$1.5 billion to be paid by Shell to the Bayelsa State Government as reparations for environmental degradation (Note. In 2003, the Nigerian House of Representatives ordered Shell to pay this amount over ten years. Shell has been the defendant in several environmentally-based class action lawsuits and as recently as January 2, 2006 was directed by a Federal High Court to pay a community in Abia State 1.8 billion naira, about \$13.5 million. End Note.). He also said the kidnappers did not recognize the committee established by the President to deal with the hostage situation.

[1](#)3. (C) Jones then spoke to Patrick Landry, whom he recognized immediately. Pat reiterated that he was not well, suffering from diarrhea and being bitten by mosquitoes. Jones, who has known Landry for years, said he genuinely sounded ill.

[1](#)4. (C) Jones' conversations with Honduran captive Ebanks and Bulgarian captive Nitchev were shorter and both hostages stressed the difficult conditions and the need for quick rescue. Jones then spoke to a man claiming to be the "commander" of the group. This man said his group would hit targets in Bayelsa and Rivers State on January 20 and would take the hostages with them. He said anything that happened to the hostages as a result would be Jones' or Tidex's fault.

[1](#)5. (C) Reuters Correspondent Tom Ashby had at least two communications with the kidnappers and one with the hostages on January 19. His conversations with the hostages about their conditions and the demands mirror the Tidex conversations; however, he additionally reports that Landry pleaded for help from the U.S. Embassy. (Note. Ashby agreed to provide ConGen Lagos with a tape of the interview for review. End Note.)

GON Efforts Lack Coordination, Yield Little Information

[1](#)6. (C) GON efforts to deal with the hostage crisis continue to be disjointed. The Governor of Bayelsa state held a meeting of Ijaw communities affected by the upsurge in violence, but community leaders pretended not to know anything about the group or its activities. Bayelsa's Deputy Governor was supposed to pay a visit on village chiefs in the Ekeremor local government area, where he comes from and where the Joint Task Force (JTF) believes the kidnappers are most active, but he has so far been unable to arrange these visits.

[1](#)7. (C) The call from the kidnappers to Tidex was facilitated through the Port Harcourt State Security Service (SSS) Headquarters; however, USG officials were recently told

that communication with the kidnappers was being handled through the JTF in Yenagoa. It is also unclear what role the Delta State Police Command, supposedly in contact with Shell's Warri crisis team, is playing. The Nigerian Navy continues to be out of touch with either the JTF or the crisis team.

Rivers Governor Discusses Strategy, Blames Alamieyeseigha

18. (SBU) British Consul General Peter Waterworth and Vice-Consul Tony Ward told Rivers State Governor Odili that the hostage situation needed to be kept separate from broader political issues and the hostages needed to be top priority. Odili said the Governors of Bayelsa and Delta States were the key players and that the military and security authorities were being deliberately kept out of the picture.

19. (SBU) Odili said he had a "hunch" youths associated with violence in 2003 had allied with supporters of impeached Bayelsa Governor Alamieyeseigha to create the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). He believes the former governor used the time between his return from the UK and his impeachment to build up support. He does not feel that the group has the capacity to extend its scope of operations, but he said the sophistication of their attacks indicated influence from "external agents."

10. (SBU) Shell Nigeria MD Basil Omiyi agreed with the Governor's remarks in a separate conversation with the British. He added that Asari had not been capable of the sophistication demonstrated so far by MEND but Alamieyeseigha was and that his influence and ability to resolve area kidnappings had extended so far that he had been nicknamed the "Governor General of the Delta." Omiyi also pointed to an e-mail he had received post-arrest from Asari's spokeswoman Cynthia White, which promised that militants would "step up their game" as it was Asari who had reined them in. Omiyi has been reassured by the GON that it would take no action to prejudice the safety of the hostages, and he believes a resolution will be effected in the "usual Nigerian way."

U.S. Mission Actions

11. (C) At an EAC meeting at 07:30 January 20, Legatt advised their negotiator was arriving and would plan to leave with Econoff John Marcinek for Warri on the morning of January 21. They will link up with SSS officials and the Shell crisis team to facilitate communications with the abductors. They will establish access to the GON's command center and GON negotiators to insure that the hostages receive humanitarian assistance.

12. (C) PolCouns said the Ambassador had been in touch frequently both with the highest levels of the GON and with the British High Commissioner. He said the Ambassador had offered to act as a channel of communication but not advocate with the GON for the companies involved in negotiations. ConGen Lagos has updated the Honduran attache and the Bulgarian Ambassador, both of whom said they had made representations to the GON on behalf of their citizens.

13. (SBU) RSO Lagos released a tearline report that information of unknown credibility indicates a moslem fundamentalist group has been casing specific Exxon and Chevron compounds to RSO Exxon/Chevron security contacts.
HOWE